

# The Library Assistant:

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## NOVEMBER MEETING.

The second ordinary meeting of the Session will be held at St. Bride Institute, Bride Lane, E.C., on Wednesday, November 9th, at 8 p.m., when Mr. Ernest A. Savage, Librarian of Bromley, Kent, will read a paper entitled, "Book Selection: An Argument and a Method."

Members of our Association, and particularly recent members, owe much to Mr. Savage. As Honorary Secretary of the Education Committee last session, he did a great deal of quiet, unobtrusive work. The programme of the session, which was a model of what a programme should be, was almost entirely his work. In inviting members and friends, therefore, to hear what Mr. Savage has to say, we are confident we are doing well, confident that the meeting will be profitable to all who attend it. We believe most assistants take a sort of an interest in the professional journals, although we do not disguise our opinion that very few read them. Among this few, however, are some who have read Mr. Savage's articles on Travelling Libraries, on Co-operative Book-buying, and a score of other subjects, which mark him as a distinctly original thinker on points of librarianship.

The subject proposed for November 9th is a fascinating one. We are prepared for the objection that book selection is almost outside the province of the assistant; but this objection applies equally to papers on such vital subjects as balance-sheets, library buildings, or lighting and ventilation. Probably there is no part of librarianship that needs wider education, clearer perception, and a more catholic mind than book-selection. In many libraries assistants are encouraged to suggest books for addition, and this admirable practice is growing. But where this is not the case book selection is what we all aspire to. We ask in confidence for a full house on November 9th.

It has been thrown at us that we are apathetic on all questions of work, and after the meeting of October 12th, which of us will dare to say the imputation is not deserved. Let us therefore redeem our characters as an Association and as library assistants by appearing in large numbers, and not only by appearing, but by taking an interested part in the discussion which Mr. Savage's paper is meant to raise.

## SEVENTH ANNUAL DINNER.

The Seventh Annual Dinner of the L.A.A. will be held at Anderton's Hotel, Fleet Street, E.C., on Wednesday, November

23rd, at 7 o'clock, when Mr. F. Meaden Roberts will preside. A good musical programme is being arranged, and all members and friends attending will be heartily welcomed. Morning dress. The tickets are 3/6 each, and may be obtained by post of Mr. E. G. Rees, Westminster Public Library, or of the Hon. Secretary.

### INAUGURAL MEETING.

On Tuesday, October 12th, Mr. Sidney Webb delivered the inaugural address of the Tenth Session of our Association, and his choice of a subject, "How to improve the Library Service," was an exceedingly happy one. Mr. H. J. Mackinder, introducing the speaker, said he was pleased to find our Association identifying itself with the University of London. Dwelling on the qualifications necessary to success in librarianship, he thought a librarian's mind should be of the same type as that of the lawyer. He must have not only a broad conception of the whole of knowledge, but he must know exactly where to find any given information. He would suggest to all who would help towards the efficiency of our national organisation that they should not think unduly of their calling, but, on the other hand, they should not think meanly of it. He regretted that through pressure of business he would be unable to stay and hear Mr. Webb's address.

#### HOW TO IMPROVE THE LIBRARY SERVICE.

Mr. Webb said that when he dealt with this subject on a former occasion he regarded the Library Service as the whole function of supplying a city with books. He would now take the narrower meaning of that phrase and endeavour to discover the means of improving the service and the condition of the staff of persons whose business it was, as librarians or assistants, to fulfil this function. At the present time librarians could not congratulate themselves on the position of the service. They did not receive from the public that generous recognition or appreciation of their services which the value of their work demanded. This unsatisfactory state of affairs was not altogether a mere matter of grudging the pounds, shillings and pence which were necessary to provide them with a well-equipped and well-endowed profession; it was part of that general undervaluing of the intellectual side of life of which England, at any rate in the Nineteenth Century, had perhaps been more guilty than any other nation. It was true that there were very few in the service who could rank among the great librarians of the past as researchers and discoverers in the

various fields of learning, but there were such—all honour to them; and this being the case, it was undesirable that the rare prizes of the calling should be bestowed on persons, however eminent and distinguished, who were outside the profession. Within the last two years the librarianship of the House of Lords had twice been vacant, yet on both occasions the vacancy had been filled by men who, however well-qualified in other respects, were not trained librarians. It rested largely with those who were library assistants to-day to remedy the present unsatisfactory condition of the service. In England nobody would dream of ranking the librarian with the clergyman, the doctor, or the lawyer, but in Germany and in France the librarian is regarded as one of the scholarly world, belonging to those classes which are intellectual in character. Perhaps he does not receive a magnificent salary, but he is granted a status far above that allowed him in this country; it would, however, be found that abroad the librarian took his part in the intellectual life, and made some contribution to original research. He was afraid that the general depreciation of the profession in England was largely due to the fact that many who entered its ranks have not always been so well-qualified for the work as they ought to be; and many did not deserve to get any more than they have. Indeed, the number of thoroughly competent librarians was not at all in proportion to that of the persons engaged in the library service. He was less surprised at this unfortunate impression of the British public than that the same opinion seemed to be held by many librarians themselves. A large percentage of librarians and assistants did nothing either to improve their education or their professional qualifications, or to take any part whatever in the intellectual life. The way to improve the status of librarianship was for the librarians themselves to become worthy of greater appreciation. He thought we were all in the world to render the utmost service that is in our power; and that we should receive for the service the means of maintenance. It is a man's business to make his work worth as much as he can; it is equally the business of the world not to pay him for his work—no work can ever be paid for—but to give him the means of maintenance.

He liked to think of the librarian's as one of the learned professions. We may have too many clergymen, we may have too many doctors, and we certainly have too many lawyers; but we have not enough librarians. He refused to look upon him as a man who merely gives out books; he wanted to look upon him as the intellectual adviser of his district, the "guide, philosopher and friend" of all the young people who came to the library. An energetic librarian has a vast influence on the

readers with whom he comes into contact : and for this reason he must be not only an educated man, but an instructive man, with a great fund of miscellaneous information. He who did not know one or two languages besides his own, and who had not also a smattering of others sufficient to enable him to spell out a title page, was only at the very beginning of his education. He should also have broad conceptions of the various sciences and of the relations they bear to each other. He did not agree with the dictum that "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing." Indeed, he had found a little knowledge a very great deal of use on many occasions. The librarian should be keen to secure the fullest collection possible of archives relating to every public building in the neighbourhood, and he should be competent to prepare a monograph on them. He would especially emphasize the necessity of preserving the records of the sewerage, paving and lighting. It should be the aim of every young librarian to mark himself out from among his fellows, and the way to do this was to produce an original piece of bibliography. Moreover, no man was worthy of promotion to any important post who had not done a piece of work of that kind. Nor must it be forgotten that the service was open to women. This was but another argument for librarians to make the most strenuous efforts to widen the boundaries of knowledge in their own department, and to increase their general efficiency. If they did not do so, the men would find themselves in time ousted by women, as they had been very largely as inspectors of factories. He felt that the interests of librarians were at stake, and he urged that everything should be done to strengthen their position. If they were really in earnest about the matter, and if their ranks were filled with men of complete education, who were the actual directors of the public taste, and the stimulators and encouragers of public learning, he felt convinced that ungenerous and unappreciative as the British public undoubtedly was as an employer, its estimation of the profession would be higher, and the reward in hard cash would be greater than it is to-day.

Mr. Chambers, in opening the discussion, called special attention to the significant fact that Mr. Webb had emphasized the danger arising from apathy on the part of assistants, as he (the speaker) and others in the profession had been preaching a crusade against it for a long time past. He believed much good could be done by men like Mr. Sidney Webb continually reminding library authorities of the importance of library work, and the absolute necessity of appointing trained men only to carry it out. The recent appointment of several untrained men over the heads of candidates with much practical experience was very discouraging, and should be denounced in season and out of season.

Messrs. Hopwood (Patent Office), Martin (Hammersmith), H. D. Roberts (Southwark), and others, carried on the discussion. A vote of thanks to Mr. Sidney Webb was moved by the Chairman of the L.A.A., and seconded by Mr. Colman; and to Mr. MacKinder on the motion of Mr. Thorne seconded by Mr. Hogg.

#### THE COMPILATION OF READING LISTS.

BY JAMES D. STEWART, Public Libraries, Croydon.

Every year there is an increase in the number of libraries employing annotated catalogues, bulletins and reading lists, for the purpose of aiding borrowers in the selection of books. With this increase in the number of libraries there is, of course, a corresponding increase in the number of assistants engaged in the compilation of such aids, and it is to these assistants that the following brief notes are addressed. Annotations have already been dealt with in these columns and elsewhere, but, with the exception of a short paper by Mr. E. A. Savage in the "Library World" some years ago, reading lists have been untouched. It is hoped, therefore, that these notes may help to fill the gap.

The initial stage in the compilation of the reading list is the choice of a subject. Now the great value of the reading list lies in the provision of a key to the literature on the topics of the day, either national or local. Subjects other than topical ones, therefore, should as a rule be avoided. I say as a rule because there are cases where lists on other subjects are valuable. Thus, for example, if a course of University Extension Lectures is being given in the neighbourhood, the library should work with the University Extensionists and provide a reading list on the subject of the lectures. There is also no reason why lists should not be given on subjects which, though not topical, are yet of general interest. As a rule, assistants will not have much to do with the choice of a subject, but there is always a chance for the assistant to suggest a subject, and if the suggestion is suitable it will probably be adopted.

Having decided upon a subject, the next step is the collection of material. For the list to be of any value this must be carried out in a systematic manner. If the library is a classified one, the task is simplified, as most of the works on the subject will be found together, and other headings likely to contain matter will suggest themselves. This method is somewhat haphazard, however, and should not be relied upon. The best way is to make use of any bibliographies of the subject that are available, and of the various guides and indexes to periodical and general literature. Fortescue's *Subject Index*, the *A.L.A. Index*, and those of Poole, and the *Review of Reviews*, are among the most useful general aids.

Although every source of material should be tested, it must not be taken for granted that every possible reference should be included in the list. On the contrary, a judicious selection of material must be made, except, perhaps, in those cases where very little material exists.

Assuming that the material has been collected, I will pass on to the consideration of its treatment. First and foremost, the list *must* be classified. Alphabetical order, which is purely accidental, is useless for reading list purposes. The headings under which the material should be arranged will vary according to the subject dealt with. The bibliography of, and general works on a subject, however, should always be put first, and the order of the sub-divisions should be from general to special. Thus, for example, in a Reading List on Natural History the order would be:

Bibliography. General, Botany (sub-divided into broad species), Birds, Insects, and so on. Where a sub-division of a subject is a large one, as in the case of Birds, it is better to make it a separate heading rather than a sub-topic under Zoology; in other words, logic must be sacrificed to utility.

The next step is the grouping of the references under the headings decided upon. If the list is to be made of practical use, this proceeding will not be as simple as it looks. The references must not be arranged according to any accidental feature such as an author's name beginning with B or Y. If an arbitrary sequence must be used, it is better to arrange in chronological order, as this gives the historical development of the subject. The most satisfactory arrangement is by the *value* of the references. The best works on the matter should be noted first, and should be followed by other references in graded order. This order must, of course, be qualified by the general to special consideration, and by differences in the character of the references. The need of a logical order is obvious when it is remembered from what standpoint a reader uses a list. He uses the reading list, not to find a particular book, but as a guide to the best sources of information on a particular subject; and he wants to be guided in the most direct way. Consequently, if the references are arranged by an A.B.C. rule, and he has no clue as to which books are most likely to answer his purpose, the list is of little value; if, on the other hand, the arrangement is logical, he can see at once what he wants.

Supposing that the references are grouped in a roughly logical order under selected headings, the next proceeding is to string them together into reading list form. Within each heading, the references should be divided into paragraphs according to differences of treatment of the subject.

The following example of a part of a reading list illustrates my meaning:

#### CHESS.

The most complete works are **Howard Staunton's** "Chess-Player's Handbook: a Popular and Scientific Introduction to the Game." 794  
Gives examples of the play of the greatest masters and is copiously supplied with diagrams illustrating the text.

The supplement, "Chess Praxis," which contains a Revised Code of Laws, and describes the more important modern improvements. 794  
And the same author's "Chess-Player's Companion." ... 794  
Contains a treatise on the game, a collection of games played by S., and Chess Problems.

Other good manuals are **R. F. Green's** "Chess." ... 794

**George Walker's** "New Treatise on Chess," which is a complete guide to the game. ... 794  
Contains a valuable bibliography of printed books on C. up to 1841.

**James Mason's** "Social Chess." ... 794  
A selection of "pretty and easily read games, having the openings as varied as possible, for examples of chess style to beginners." None of the games exceeds forty moves.

And **Pole's** "Handbook of Games." ... 793

On Chess Problems see **James Rayner's** "Chess Problems: Their Composition and Solution." ... 794  
Has a collection of 108 problems with solutions. "The purpose of this book is to popularise problem composition and solution among young chess-players." Pref.

For examples of master-play see "Mr. **Blackburn's** Games at Chess." Ed. P. Anderson Graham. Also contains a brief history of Blindfold Chess.... 794

"**Morphy's Games of Chess**," with analytical and critical notes by  
J. Lowenthal.

And "**The Chess Tournament of 1851**," ed. **Staunton**, and "**The  
Chess Congress of 1862**," ed. **Lowenthal**. ... .. 794

This is not an ideal piece of reading list work, but it illustrates many of the points. The references contained in it are, as will be seen, grouped roughly into four paragraphs. One begins at the first entry and continues to the third; the second commences with "Other good manuals," and ends with "Pole's Handbook"; the third is an example of an entry which really stands alone, the reference to chess problems being complete in itself; the fourth comprises the last three references. It will be seen that each paragraph is finished off with "and"; this is advisable, as it rounds the ending, and indicates the termination of a particular treatment. If the paragraph is read aloud, the truth of this will be apparent. Of course the paragraphs in the above example are very brief. Sometimes there are ten or even twenty references in one, in which case it is advisable to break it up a bit, as:

See **Jones's**

**Thompson's**

The same author's

**Smith's**

Also **Brown's**

**Robinson's**

And **White's**

but this is really of not much importance.

As a rule it is not necessary to give the author's Christian name. This, however, is purely a matter for discretion, though where there are several authors with the same surname it is advisable to distinguish them; again, "Hunt" is not a particularly imposing name, but if the Christian name is given, and it becomes "Leigh Hunt," it at once attains a certain authority.

With regard to the annotation of reading lists—of course it goes without saying that they *should* be annotated—most that can be said has already been said. The rules given for the annotation of catalogue entries printed in these columns a short time ago apply equally to the annotation of entries in reading lists. There are, however, a few special features which should be taken into consideration. These are the presence of any information having special importance in view of the subject of the list, the presence of illustrations, etc., of like value, and the relation of the books to one another as regards value and treatment. The last is of importance, as it is of great assistance in grouping the entries.

The editorial blue pencil will not permit me to enlarge further on the subject, so I must conclude with the hope that these few notes will be of some slight assistance to that ever-increasing body referred to in my first paragraph.

#### THE COMMITTEE.

Mr. Chambers presided at the third meeting (19th October), and Messrs. Bullen, Coltman, Coutts, Green, Hatcher, Hogg, Poulter, Rees, Rivers, Roebuck, Smith, Sureties, and Thorne were present.

Eight new members were enrolled.

In addition to formal business the Report of the Special Committee on the Annual Dinner arrangements was discussed and adopted. All communications for next Committee must reach Hon. Secretary on or before November 10th.

## PROFICIENCY TESTS.

The Committee are pleased to note the interest taken in this effort, and strongly urge all members who have not sent in their names to do so at once. *It is absolutely necessary that names should reach Mr. W. C. B. Sayers, Central Library, Croydon, on or before November 23rd*, because printed particulars of the tests will be sent to each candidate before the appearance of the December LIBRARY ASSISTANT. No candidate is bound to attempt more than one subject unless he is so disposed. In our next issue Messrs. Doubleday and Guppy will set their test questions, and all papers must reach Mr. Sayers not later than 3 days after the receipt of the Journal by the candidate.

## LIBRARY JOURNALS.

*Bulletin du Bibliophile et du Bibliothécaire* for October contains further instalments of the articles on the French primitives, and M. Lorédan Larchey. In the latter we get a pleasant glimpse of the famous librarian at work. There are also some remarks of his, which are very much to the point, on literary method, and criticisms of Balzac (his favourite novelist), Gautier, Musset, and Hugo. The number also contains two hitherto unpublished letters of Alfred de Vigny, and continuations of the monographs on Longepierre, the De Thous, and the bibliography of 18th and 19th century illustrated almanacs. We learn that it has been decided to publish a *Livre d'or* in commemoration of the centenary of Sainte-Beuve. A memorial tablet is also to be placed on the house where the great critic was born at Boulogne.

*Croydon Readers' Index*.—The September-October number contains an admirable little paper on English letters by Mr. W. C. B. Sayers, a list of additions to the Lending Library, and a reading list on the Russian seizure of British ships, compiled by Mr. J. D. Stewart.

*Newcastle Catalogue of Bewick Collection*.—This is a handsomely got up work, illustrated by a number of reproductions of Bewick's finest blocks. The catalogue is profusely annotated, and should prove of much value to bibliographers.

The catalogue of children's books in the same library is also a careful piece of work.

*Nottingham Library Bulletin* for November contains a sympathetic introduction to the works of "Mark Rutherford," and the usual annotated list of additions. The number shows signs of much activity on the part of printers' devils.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS.

**Accrington**.—The controlling body of one of the oldest institutions in Accrington, the Mechanics' Institute, is handing over to the Corporation,



for the purposes of the new library (towards which Mr. Carnegie is giving £6,000), a valuable plot of land, a large house and 6000 volumes. The Library will be in the centre of the business part of the borough. The work of erection will be proceeded with immediately.

**Bibliography.**—An illustrated article on "Early methods of Type-founding," by J. Eliot Hodgkin, appeared in "Engineering" for October 14th. This will be found most useful to Mr. H. D. Roberts' pupils.

**Bo'ness.**—The new public library consists of two principal floors, superimposed on a lower one, which contains the librarian's house, book-store, work-room, &c. The ground floor of the library contains a news-room, with accommodation for twenty-four newspaper readers and about sixty magazine readers, a reference room, with accommodation for sixteen readers, and shelving for 1,750 volumes, and a lending library with shelving accommodation for 14,000 volumes. The upper floor, which is approached by a stone staircase, treated somewhat monumentally, contains a lecture room, seated for about 350 adults, with lecturer's room, &c.

**Hackney.**—The Committee have approved of the new site given by Col. Frank Rhodes and the trustees of the Rhodes estate for a Public Library in Forest Road, Dalston, N.

**Haslingden.**—Mr. Carnegie, a short time ago, intimated his willingness to contribute £2,500 for a Public Library. The building to be purchased is that of the Haslingden Institute, and the members of the Institute agreed to a dissolution of the trust on condition that they were allowed to rent three rooms for the purposes of a club. On informing Mr. Carnegie of this stipulation, the Corporation received the reply that if Mr. Carnegie could have foreseen the trouble it would have involved him in correspondence the first application of Haslingden would never have been considered. If his offer were to remain good, the whole of the premises must be used for library purposes. With this intimation before them, the members of the Institute have authorised the Committee to negotiate with the Corporation on any basis the Corporation may desire.

**Hornsey.**—The Libraries Committee have instituted a series of monthly lectures, and the first was given on Wednesday, October 12th, when Mr. Clement Shorter gave an admirable lecture on "The Best Books: an unconventional gossip on Books and Reading." In response to the Committee's invitation, over 300 ratepayers attended the lecture—a very successful beginning. Mr. Shorter criticised Lord Avebury's selection of the 100 best books, and expressed his opinion that they were unsuitable for the general reader and required a special education to read and understand them. The lecturer proceeded to give what were in his opinion the 100 best books for the general reader. These he divided into two sections—works by living authors, and the works of dead authors. Amongst the former he mentioned Barrie, Carroll, Meredith, Kipling, Tolstoi, Bryce, Clodd, Lang, S. Lee, Maeterlinck, Meynell, S. Phillips. Among the dead authors he mentioned Jane Austen, Balzac, Borrow, C. Brontë, Cervantes, Bunyan, Dickens, S. Johnson, Goldsmith, Scott, R. Boswell, Carlyle, Chaucer, Dante, DeQuincey, Gibbon, Goethe, Chas. Lamb, Milton, S. Peppys, Plutarch, Shakespeare and Sir R. Steele.

**Hove.**—A site for a Public Library, which Mr. Carnegie is providing at a cost of £10,000, has been decided upon by the Corporation.

**Ilford.**—Plans of new the Library for Ilford appeared in the "Ilford Recorder" for October 14th.

**Islington.**—At a meeting of the Islington Borough Council, the Town Clerk announced the receipt of a letter from Mr. Andrew Carnegie's private secretary, stating that Mr. Carnegie had agreed to provide £40,000 for the erection of one central and four branch libraries on sites to be provided by the Council in the four Parliamentary divisions of Islington, on condition that the full rate of a penny in the pound for their support be raised. The Mayor (Mr. A. M. Torrance) said he scarcely knew in what terms to refer to this munificent and princely gift, the grandeur of which was beyond his expectations. A vote of thanks was passed, all the members standing and cheering.—The Public Libraries Committee recommend their return *en bloc* on November 18th, in order that work may proceed without interruption.

**Lewisham.**—At a meeting of the Council, the Libraries Committee reported that thirteen designs have been sent in for the new branch library at Brockley. That numbered nine had been accepted, subject to a *bona fide* tender within the specified limit, viz., £4,500, which is to include fittings, fixtures, and architect's and quantity surveyor's fees. The report was adopted.

**Liverpool Library Old Boys' Association.**—The first re-union of this Society was held on Monday, the 17th Oct., at the Bear's Paw, under the chairmanship of Mr. W. Formby, late deputy librarian. There were present Mr. P. Cowell, chief librarian and president, Messrs. G. G. Walmsley, E. Howarth, F.Z.S., F.R.A.S. (director of the Sheffield Museum and Art Gallery), Mr. John S. Moore, and a representative gathering of old library boys, covering a period of over 40 years of the Library's existence. The entertainment was provided by the Municipal Pierrots, under the direction of Mr. F. G. Gillies as conductor. Letters of apology for non-attendance were read from old library boys at a distance, Messrs. J. H. Quinn (Chelsea), J. Frowde (Bermondsey), A. Cawthorne (Stepney), and S. E. Thompson (Swansea), librarians of the respective places named. Speeches were made by Mr. Cowell, Mr. G. Howarth (Sheffield), one of the oldest of Old Boys, the Chairman of the Old Library Boys' Committee, Mr. W. Hogarth and Mr. W. Quinn (Treasurer). The arrangements were largely in the hands of Messrs. W. R. Wild and J. C. Howarth (Joint Secretaries). This organisation is believed to be the only one of its kind in connection with any existing Public Library in the Kingdom.

**Newcastle Daily Chronicle.**—"The questions that seemed to be mainly occupying the attention of the librarians at the L.A. Conference were such as these—whether free public libraries were among the grandest engines of intellectual progress and social elevation; whether they should not be amalgamated with the work of the education authorities, so that school teachers should take a part in the selection of books, and librarians take a part in the management of schools; whether novel-reading tends to create a well-informed and studious nation; whether the attitude of the older universities to practical studies is not altogether false; and whether librarians should not be employed and delegated to criticise the books under their custody for the enlightenment of the people who wish to read them. Modestly, yet firmly, we maintain that most of these topics are beyond the legitimate scope of such a conference; and that many of them embody crude and presumptuous propositions. . . . The librarian is a vendor of all wares, and is no more responsible than the grocer for the quality of the goods he purveys. The ratepayers pay for the library, and they will have the books that please them, and will refuse to read those they do not like. It is no use lining the shelves of a free library with the recondite works of scientists, educationists, and philosophers, or

the classic treasures of past ages, if the people prefer the last bran-new flimsy tale that comes hot from the press. The less, therefore, we have of high-flown speeches about education and enlightenment in connection with such libraries, the less will shallow people deceive themselves that all this has anything to do with the function of the librarian. His duty is to arrange, classify, and catalogue, and to see that his customers, the rate-payers, get what they want. That is what the library has been provided for; and it is really the only function it is ever likely to discharge."

Some thirty or forty years ago one used to hear a good deal of this sort of stuff, but we were under the impression that the last of these ranters had long ago gone to sleep. One scarcely expected to find one of them waking like Rip van Winkle in this year of grace 1904. We live and learn.

**Penarth.**—The new public library will be in the Elizabethan style, faced with Pennant stone, with Bath stone dressings. In the basement will be a boys' reading room, 40 feet by 10 feet, with lavatory accommodation and heating apparatus. On the ground floor will be a large hall and lending library about 40 feet square, with librarian's room, also a reading room, 44 feet long and 23 feet wide. On the first floor will be a ladies' reading room, 36 feet long and 17 feet wide, and a reference library, 30 feet by 18 feet. The Council have under consideration a proposal to erect a caretaker's house at the far end of the library.

**Poets Laureate.**—"Spy" writes asking for the names of the poets laureate. We have pleasure in printing the list.

Edmund Spenser.	1591-1599.	Laurence Eusden.	1718-1730.
Samuel Daniel.	1599-1619.	Colley Cibber.	1730-1757.
Ben Jonson.	1619-1637.	William Whitehead.	1757-1785.
Sir Wm. Davenant.	1660-1668.	Thomas Warton.	1785-1790.
John Dryden.	1670-1689.	Henry James Pyc.	1790-1813.
Thomas Shadwell.	1689-1692.	Robert Southey.	1813-1843.
Nahum Tate.	1692-1715.	William Wordsworth.	1843-1850.
Nicholas Rowe.	1715-1718.	Alfred, Lord Tennyson.	1850-1892.
Alfred Austin. 1892-			

Between the death of Ben Jonson and the election of Sir William Davenant, the office of laureate was vacant.

**Port Elizabeth.**—We are glad to be able to state that an application to the Home Government has resulted in a presentation to the library of those volumes of the Record Office publications which are still in print. This valuable gift consists of some three hundred volumes of books, containing transcripts of many of the most important documents upon which the study of English history is based; and the importance of this addition to the public library can be best gauged when it is remembered that hitherto the historical student in this part of South Africa was entirely dependent upon such popular historical works as the various libraries contained, and was quite unable to go to original sources for information. At once he is placed in possession of many of the most valuable historical tools, and can not only verify all references in printed historical works, but can carry out independent investigations for himself though far removed from his native country.

**Portishead.**—The Council, on the recommendation of their General Purposes Committee, resolved to decline Mr. Carnegie's offer of £1,000 for the building of a public library. At the same time it is hoped to be able at some future time to accept the money.

**Portsmouth.**—The Town Council have resolved to purchase, for the sum of £1,600, a site for the erection of a new branch library at Fratton, to be provided by the gift promised by Mr. Carnegie.

**Woolwich.**—Mr. John Morley has consented to open the new public library at Plumstead on Saturday, December 17th.

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#### CORRESPONDENCE.

*To the Editor of the "Library Assistant."*

DEAR SIR,—Will you kindly allow me sufficient space to enquire of my brethren in the profession which is the best method of re-cataloguing a library whilst the books are in circulation?

It has fallen to my lot to accomplish this task, and the principal difficulty which besets me is, "how am I to know whether all the books have been dealt with?" Those that *have* been re-catalogued can be recognized by some distinguishing mark, but how I am to make sure none have been missed rather perplexes me.

Trusting some of your readers may be able to help me out of my dilemma.

I am, yours etc.,

PUZZLED.

19th October, 1904.

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#### NEW MEMBERS.

**Senior.**—Mr. W. H. Shawcross, Woolwich.

**Junior.**—Messrs. A. Carlisle, Woolwich; E. G. H. Carter, Holborn; A. H. Davis, Woolwich; A. L. Johnson, Mile End; R. A. Pike, Yarmouth; F. C. Saltmarsh, Tottenham; H. A. Twort, Croydon.

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#### APPOINTMENTS.

CLARE, Mr. Amos, of Oldham, to be District Librarian, Glasgow.

JONES, Mr. Joseph, of Cardiff, to be Librarian of Salisbury.

ROY, Mr. John, of Belfast Libraries, to be District Librarian, Glasgow.

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#### ADDRESSES.

Chairman and Hon. Treasurer—Mr. W. G. Chambers, Public Library, Plumstead.

Hon. Secretary—Mr. Geo. E. Roebuck, St. George's Library, 236 Cable Street, E.

Hon. Secretary Education Sub-Committee—Mr. W. C. Berwick Sayers, Public Library, Croydon.

Hon. Librarian—Mr. A. H. Carter, Public Library, St. Martin's Lane, W.C.